



Director of
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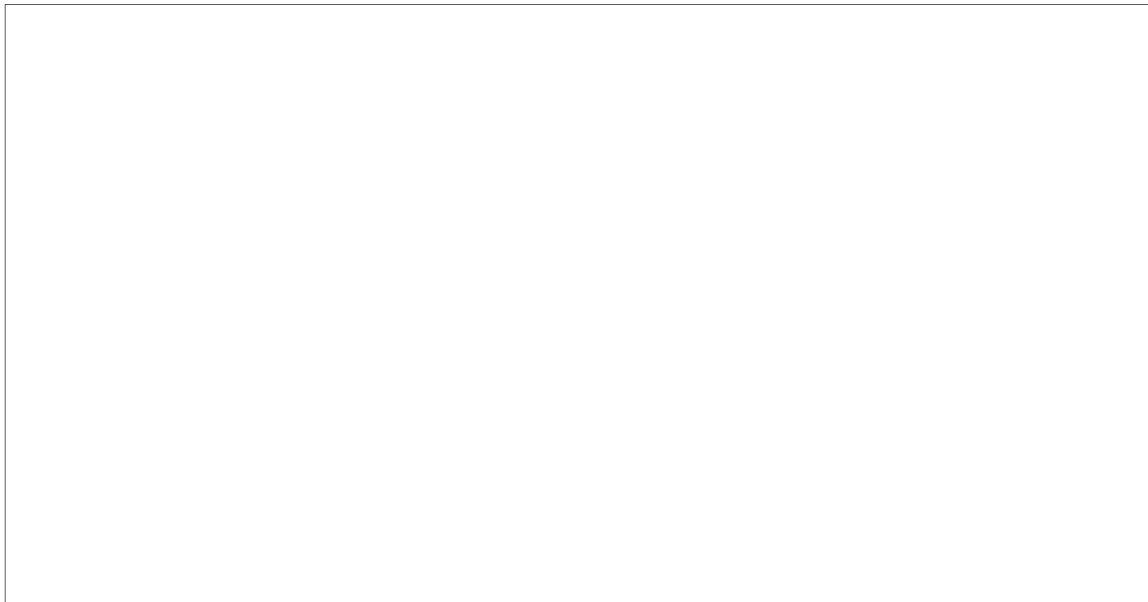
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SPECIAL ANALYSES

(P) POLAND: Rigidity and Restiveness

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As martial law enters its fifth month, the regime seems no closer now than in December to finding workable solutions to Poland's political and economic problems. Increased hostility toward the authorities, the lack of action by the government, and the steady deterioration of the standard of living have given rise to some popular resistance and new pressure from the Church. Although some conciliatory gesture could be under discussion, the regime's response to these pressures will be continued reliance on coercion. The Central Committee may shed some light on the party feuding and on party leader Jaruzelski's near-term plans.

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The predominant attitude among the people remains one of disgruntled resignation. Nevertheless, there recently have been signs of increasing defiance. These include several short work stoppages, protests by students and intellectuals over the firing of the popular rector of Warsaw University, and a brief--and probably initial--broadcast by the clandestine Radio Solidarity on 12 April that reflected the ingenuity and tenacity of Solidarity activists.

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The Church also has put the government in a bind by releasing a carefully crafted program for national accord. Although it is mostly a restatement of old demands, the proposal reflects the Church's determination to push the regime to moderate its policies. In addition, it calls attention to the regime's failure to devise its own program.

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The authorities also can find little satisfaction with recent economic performance. Small increases in production in February and March and the rebound in mining have been largely offset by the growth of industrial capacity that is going unused because of shortages of imported Western materials and equipment.

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A Polish official has indicated that Poland cannot meet the interest payment due on 10 May under the agreement signed with bankers earlier this month that reschedules debt due in 1981 but never paid. [REDACTED]

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Moreover, an expected 24-percent decline in real income this year would cause additional unrest among the workers. The food situation is no longer getting worse but no substantial improvement is in sight, and meat may become more scarce. [REDACTED]

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No New Policy Initiatives

Despite these pressures, the authorities seem to be impeded by the same sterile thinking and bureaucratic maneuvering that have afflicted previous regimes. Jaruzelski evidently is satisfied, however, with the restoration of central political control, and his determination to preserve it probably will prevent him from adopting new policies that might give his regime more credibility with the population. [REDACTED]

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Some in the regime believe that the repressive apparatus of martial law must be maintained, possibly for years, to contain popular disaffection and deter Solidarity activists from resuming their political activities. The government appears to be in a position to contain discontent through repression, and it has begun imposing stiffer sentences on Solidarity activists convicted of martial law offenses. [REDACTED]

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Political and Economic Prospects

If the military regime comes under increased pressure, it would be more likely to resort to its familiar tactics of coercion than to seek political solutions. The people are becoming less afraid of military rule, and this may lead to more frequent defiance, although not necessarily greater violence.

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Although broader opposition to the regime probably will not seriously threaten the regime's control, it will encourage more political infighting and reinforce the position of hardline elements who oppose ending martial law restrictions. To encourage West Europeans to reduce sanctions and grant credits, the government may consider releasing a large number of internees, reducing some restrictions, or announcing a willingness to accept "independent" trade unions. It might even formally abolish martial law, although tight security controls would be maintained.

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West European governments would welcome any such move and would attribute the change, in part, to their continuing dialogue with Warsaw. They probably would consider relaxing some sanctions to encourage further softening of the regime's policy. Such initiatives, however, would not lead to a major extension of Western credit lines to Poland, because banks would remain skeptical of the country's economic future.

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